

The Seedbed Blog by Chase Franklin International Ministries: Pentecostals Rediscovering their Wesleyan Heritage



“I’ve got something that I want you to pray about...”

When someone speaks these words to a friend or pastor, it’s normally out of personal need or an urgent and distressing situation. This need or situation will usually elicit a caring and loving response. If you are a pastor and you hear these words come from one of your denominational [leaders](#), well, let’s just say that you never know what’s coming next or how it could change your life.

Upon receiving my credentials with the Assemblies of God, my Sectional Presbyter, who is also the pastor of the church I attended, presented the opportunity for me to plant an Assembly of God church in Wilmore. As there were no traditional [Pentecostal](#) churches in Wilmore, I immediately knew that this was the right thing to do. The wheels were put in motion to begin the church, named Every Nation Assembly of God. However, this wouldn’t be an ordinary church plant.

If Wesleyanism had a holy city, Wilmore would certainly be a candidate. Methodism is the main denomination in this area with several churches, a university, and a seminary with Methodist roots. While the Assemblies of God (and other classical Pentecostal denominations) certainly have a heritage in the Wesleyan Holiness revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries, they have never claimed to be a Wesleyan denomination. This is a mistake as Pentecostalism has much to learn, or rediscover, from its Wesleyan roots, and vice versa. [The Seedbed](#)

While obtaining a seminary degree from a Wesleyan school, I had the unique opportunity to combine my Assemblies of God background with my Wesleyan-influenced education in this new church plant. I knew that there were certain elements of both traditions that I would want to incorporate in a local congregation.

The main components from the Assemblies of God is worshiping without any time constraints and allowing the Holy Spirit to move within the service. The main component from Wesleyanism is a more concentrated focus on the Eucharist, or Holy Communion.

Many churches, Pentecostal or not, do not practice Holy Communion more than once a month, once a quarter, or even once a year. A popular argument for this is that Communion has the potential to lose its meaning and simply become another thing that the congregation does week after week if practiced more frequently. This caution is valid, as Communion should be kept sacred and there's a risk in cheapening it. However, I believe the greater risk comes in not celebrating it enough.

In his sermon "The Duty of Constant Communion," John Wesley expounds that it is in fact a duty of each believer to take Communion as often as he or she can (four to five times a week). In Luke 22:19, Jesus tells the disciples to celebrate this Communion in remembrance of Him, and this remembrance leads to the "strengthening and refreshing of our souls." As we partake of the body and blood of our Lord, we remind ourselves of the great price that our Savior paid for us. We are encouraged by the wonderful gift of grace we've been given, and it would do our souls well to be reminded of that as often as possible.

Additionally, the Table unites us in ways that sermons and singing cannot do. Even if you are worshiping in the same building with people that you may not like, you still must come to the Table alongside them. God has offered the gift of salvation to all people, and all people are welcome to the Table.

Furthermore, the Table is a place where broken and hungry sinners can have a meal with the Master. Just as Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners in their homes, Jesus desires to eat at the Table with those who seek but have not yet found. He offers Himself to all those who would come and eat of His body and drink of His blood. The Table can serve as such an evangelistic tool if we would only take the risk of offering it to the world as often as possible.

Surely mainline churches have much to learn from Pentecostal worship and the Holy Spirit's current work as patterned in the book of Acts. In the same way, Pentecostal churches ought to be open to learning from the rich tradition of their predecessors. Every Nation Assembly of God will be rediscovering its Wesleyan heritage by celebrating Holy Communion every week, and I'd like to extend the invitation to you and your congregation to do the same.

I want you to pray about it.